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AUTHOR Bjerstedt, Ake
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ABSTRACT

Fifty experts with a special interest in peace education (and representing 22 different countries) were confronted with the following set of questions (as part of individual interviews): "In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in the schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?" This report documents and discusses the answers of the experts to these questions. Most of the respondents agreed that peace education often was seen as a controversial topic in their country, and a large number of illustrations and possible counter-measures were mentioned. (Author/RJC)

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Department of Educational and Psychological Research

School of Education Malmö • Lund University
Box 23501, S-200 45 Malmö, Sweden

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Controversies connected with peace education

What do they mean and how should they be dealt with?

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ÅKE BJERSTEDT

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CONTROVERSIES CONNECTED WITH PEACE EDUCATION: WHAT DO THEY MEAN AND HOW SHOULD THEY BE DEALT WITH?

Åke Bjerstedt

Fifty experts with a special interest in peace education (and representing twenty-two different countries) were confronted with the following set of questions (as part of individual interviews): "In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?" The present report documents and discusses the answers of the experts to these questions. Most of the respondents agreed that peace education was often seen as a controversial topic in their country, and a large number of illustrations and possible counter-measures were mentioned.

Keywords: Aims of education, citizenship education, conflicts, disarmament, global approach, interviews, learning process, nuclear war, pacifism, parents, peace education, security.

PART I

The present report documents and discusses answers to the following set of questions: "In many countries, questions related to disarmament and peace are highly controversial. Would you anticipate any difficulties, for example with parents or other members of the community, when introducing peace education in schools? If so, what kind of difficulties? Do you see any way out of such problems?" These questions were included in individual interviews with fifty experts (representing twenty-two countries) with a special interest in peace education.

Part I of this report presents my attempts to summarize and discuss some major aspects of the answers, while Part II gives a more detailed documentation of the interview answers in this area. – More information about the fifty experts is available in a separate report (Bjerstedt, 1993a); and other parts of these interviews are dealt with elsewhere (cf, for example, Bjerstedt, 1993b, 1994b).

In this part of the report, I will start with some comments on various views of society, the school and change in more general terms in relation to the peace education of the school. Then I will bring up a series of more specific and concrete difficulties or obstacles in the peace education efforts, with examples and quotes from the interview material. Finally, certain measures aimed at coming to terms with the difficulties will be discussed.

1.

Reflections on various ways of looking at society, the school and change in general may contribute to shedding light on the reactions often inspired by peace-oriented schoolwork.

Society can, for example, be viewed from different perspectives of time. We have *society* as it is now, at the *present* moment (Sp); society as it used to be, in a *historical* perspective (Sh); and society as it will be in the *future* (Sf). Naturally, society in a historical perspective is not a uniform concept, but a collective term for a series of different societies: Sh1, Sh2 etc.

Of course, we never have absolute or direct access to "Society" in all its details. Instead, we have created notions, cognitive pictures or images of it that are characterized by many distortions and simplifications.

Every individual has his or her *image* of the present society (ISp) as well as his or her notion of society in a historical perspective (ISh), which tend

to be fairly lacking in details and quite distorted. In addition, every one of us has a certain, albeit relatively vague, image of society in the future (ISf).

As far as our notions of the future are concerned, it may often be fruitful to distinguish between two different types of images. Thus we can talk about "the *anticipated* future" (IaSf) when we create a picture of what we think will actually happen; and we can use the expression "the *desired* future" (IdSf) when we create a cognitive picture of what we would like the future to be (positive vision). Recent psychological studies often show these two types of future-related images to be considerably different among young people (cf, for example, Bjerstedt, 1992; Bjurwill, 1986).

Many people think that the role or task of school should mainly be that of "reproducing", i.e. school is primarily considered to be an instrument for recreating the present societal conditions (passing on the tradition). In that way it contributes to considerable similarities at various points in time: Sh1 = Sh2 = Sp = Sf.

Some of those people who think that this is how school mainly functions consider this to be a desirable state of affairs. We can call them "traditionalists" (or say that they represent "Norm T"). The following equivalence then applies to them: IdSf = ISp. (A subgroup might be critical of the educational policies of the present and rather think in terms of IdSf = ISh.)

Others consider such passing on of traditions to be undesirable (IdSf ≠ ISp) but feel that the reproductive forces of society are so powerful that school is forced to "follow" and really cannot bring about any change. Perhaps we can call this group "progressive school pessimists" (or say that they represent "Norm PP").

There is, on the other hand, a third group who think that school has a certain potential for being one of the forces leading to a different society, one that is more like IdSf. Hence, school may be regarded as one of the tools in our work to bring about value-oriented societal change.

Peace-oriented education is not a very precise concept; many different subgoals and educational efforts may be implied by various actors in the peace education field (see e.g. Bjerstedt, 1994b). But in many cases it seems accurate to say that the "peace educator" starts out from an explicit or implicit assumption, that a certain amount of societal change through school towards a future society more in accordance with a positive vision is both desirable and possible. The tool needed here is to empower our students to be better able and willing to shape the future society in a desirable way: we give them a different and better "preparedness for the future", we reinforce

certain desirable "value perspectives", we stimulate an "action readiness" etc. In these cases, peace educators may be classified as "progressive school optimists" (or be said to represent "Norm PO").

This particular view can easily lead to attacks, both from "traditionalists" and from "progressive school pessimists".

Obviously all this is quite schematic and abstract; but perhaps this special situation of the peace educator can partly explain the "normative drought" that he or she so often experiences. There are, so to speak, snorts from the right wing as well as from part of the left wing (which was seen, for example, in the Swedish press debate when the Swedish National Board of Education tried to introduce recommendations for the schools in the area of peace education in the middle of the 80s).

The resistance tends to be particularly pronounced since the part of society that is potentially affected directly or indirectly (that is, the "defence") is emotionally charged as a "symbol of security" and periodically almost taboo, even in the general political debate.

2.

Looking over the answers of our fifty expert respondents, it is easy to see that a very large majority report controversies around peace education and various kinds of difficulties or obstacles experienced by peace educators. This is especially true for our respondents from Europe and North America. A few brief, typical formulations may be given as illustrations:

"Yes, not only do we anticipate such difficulties. We have experienced them for years...". (Susan Alexander, USA.)

"Yes, we can undoubtedly count on such difficulties." (Birgit Brock-Utne, Norway.)

"That was certainly the case in the mid 80s in England, because the Right-wing press and Right-wing politicians argued that peace education was about nuclear disarmament and this made good headlines." (David Hicks, England.)

"Of course there are difficulties because people are fearful and ignorant." (Kathleen Kanet, USA.)

"Many teachers and heads have experienced difficulties with parents, governors, Local Education Authorities or even the press when introducing peace education issues in their schools or classrooms." (Hanns-Fred Rathenow, Germany.)

"Yes, people do have difficulties if they are introducing peace education in schools. It's a hot potato." (Paul Smoker, talking about England.)

"I think there are difficulties in both North and South, certainly in North countries."(Toh Swee-Hin, Canada.)

"It's a very controversial issue for many town councils in the Netherlands...". (Lennart Vriens, The Netherlands.)

A few exceptions from this general rule are observed, and these are typically from countries outside the areas of Europe and North America:

"I have met this situation in the United States. ...And I have experienced it in West Germany when I have been visiting. But in India I have not faced it. Indians are very traditional and tend to respect what is done in the school. If the school is giving a particular course, they will take it without questioning it. Also Gandhi's name is very important in India, and he is associated with peace and non-violence unambiguously." (Anima Bose, India.)

"In Costa Rica, people want more materials, more speakers etc. in this area. That would be the only difficulty that I have met. I've never heard of parents or others who don't want it. ...It isn't controversial in the same way as I know it is in Europe." (Celina Garcia, Costa Rica.)

In the following I will discuss some examples of phenomena that may create difficulties and obstacles in peace education work. I am referring to phenomena at quite different levels but that are partly interconnected.

The international political tradition of heavily armed nations, and their armament backed by a military and economic establishment, is of course a powerful counterforce to be taken into account. The representatives of this tradition and these interests have great resources at their disposal for influencing public opinion in a direction opposite from the one that "disarmament education" is working for. It easily turns into a "David against Goliath" situation. One component in this tradition can be described as a *"culture of militarism"*. To a large extent, the political tradition is also marked by a *nationalistic perspective*, and shifting over to a global perspective is no minor change. This is something that Robert Muller, the former UN official, emphasized in his answers to our questions.

"Changing from a nationalistic education to a global education and an education for peace means a dramatic change in perspective. It is natural that some would look upon this change with concern and suspicion. But we have good arguments on our side, and we should spell them out clearly." (Robert Muller.)

The stereotyped thinking of much debate in the mass media. That a certain political tradition exists is one thing, but what is regrettable in addition is that this tradition has more or less become regarded as a "natural condition" which it is not humanly possible to change. Here the stereotyped thinking in much of the debate in the mass media is important. A lot is often said about adapting to "reality", "the requirements of security" etc, whereas comparatively little energy is devoted to a critical analysis of this tradition. It is often built into the stereotyped language that discussions of these issues are couched in, as a self-evident assumption, that "a high level of armament" = "security". People trying to question various such assumptions run the risk of being attacked as subversives, "communists" etc. Even the word "peace" is often loosely connected, in this stereotyped thinking, with leftism and subversion.

"Certainly we have many such difficulties in many countries. It depends a little on the community. In the communities our family has happened to live in, there has been less antagonism to it than in others, partly because they have been academic communities. There has been a university in the town, and that means that you have a somewhat more literate and liberal community. But I am very conscious of the people who are seeing a communist under every bed or behind every bush; I know what that is like." (Elise Boulding.)

"Right-wing people, particularly the radical right in the U.S., have tried to identify concern with peace and peace education with a left-wing position; it has been considered 'bad', 'communism' and so on." (Morton Deutsch.)

"I would think that not every point of view about war and peace deserves equal status – we have to make certain professional judgements. ... I am reflecting the view that part of the problem we have in dealing with questions of war and peace and education about them is our failure to examine critically certain concepts and certain assumptions. That is what I have been stressing throughout my remarks: that we don't sufficiently examine the concept of security and the concept of the nation state." (Herbert C. Kelman.)

Anxiety as an obstacle to new solutions. Many people are worried about current developments. Anxiety creates a non-creative climate of thought. We then cling to old solutions, even though we do not really believe in them, not daring to try out new strategies. We are afraid of the unknown; we are afraid of unpleasant economic consequences; and it may feel good

for us to focus our anxiety by associating it with notions of someone who can be experienced as "the enemy". Then, of course, a change of what is seen as the equivalent of "security" (i.e. the level of armament) may give rise to particular anxiety.

The conditions mentioned so far may be said to be *general forces in society*, which make those who want to promote peace education at school feel that they are fighting an uphill battle. If we consider *difficulties and obstacles more directly associated with the school situation*, a few additional factors may be mentioned.

The "intellectualist tradition" in education. There is a strong tradition of concentrating on "facts", "knowledge", "matter-of-factness" and "objectivity" in research and education at various levels. We should not let value judgements influence our search for knowledge in a misleading way. We should allow free scope for many voices rather than indoctrinating. In many ways, this tradition has been valuable in creating watchfulness against biased proselytizers and propagandists of various hues. On the other hand, this tradition has also occasionally led to a rigid repudiation of all kinds of value-related influences, especially those which deviate from the traditional, institutionalized ones. This theme is often touched upon in our interviews.

"Education on political conflicts and problems is controversial in different ways. First of all until the mid-eighties, peace education was confronted with mistrust of its objectives; especially with regard to themes like security policy. This was inspired by the fear of partiality, one-sided information and hidden objectives. It had to do with fixed political opinions, and it was also related to the predominant view that *education should be neutral*". (Henk B. Gerritsma; italics added here.)

"The difficulties are mainly caused by parents or politicians or members of the press who argue that peace education is biased, whereas other education is not. Now, I happen to believe that all education is biased; you show me unbiased education, and I will show you a square circle. I think that one can have an educational system in which many different biases are represented, and I am in favour of that, but I am unashamedly biased towards peace, avoidance of violence, elimination of structural violence and so forth. I think that it is wrong to defend peace education by saying it's neutral, as some people do. It *is* biased, but so is the teaching of all social subjects. Education is not independent of values and ethics. The thing is to get a good range of biases, and then people can decide for themselves."

(Paul Smoker.)

"Then there is this whole interesting question of balanced teaching and balanced learning. You have a balanced learning situation when you have learnt about all sides. But in order to accomplish that, it might be necessary to have unbalanced teaching. An example of that might be that in the debate about defence, the options put up are often either to have a nuclear defence or a non-nuclear defence. But as a pacifist, I could argue that in fact these two positions may very well be seen as representing the same side of the spectrum in terms of violence, and that the real spectrum to be looked at when discussing defence is from violent defence to non-violent defence. If a teacher were sympathetic to that point of view, they might invite me or some other pacifist in for a onetime input to put our point of view across. It might not be necessary to have another teacher in for another input with, say, the NATO point of view, because there is so much information and propaganda available anyway. But then it could be argued that because nobody went in to balance the 'pacifistic' argument, the teaching was biased." (Richard Yarwood.)

Resistance from local or central school authorities. In Sweden, the central school authority – the Swedish National Board of Education – sided with the pedagogical peace workers by means of various kinds of central recommendations (in the 1980s), which contributed to a legitimization of education for peace; the situation is similar in Finland, for example. In some countries, there is no corresponding pronounced and explicit support by the authorities (in Denmark, for example). In other countries, there are several examples of negative attitudes on the part of the authorities, at least within certain parts of the school system (in Great Britain, for example). In other words, the relationship between school authorities at various levels and teachers interested in peace education varies considerably from one part of the world to another, which is also evident in our interviews.

Resistance from parents. Several interview answers mention and discuss resistance on the part of parents. The most common motivations are that the children may experience education for peace as frightening (for example when the consequences of nuclear war are discussed) and that peace education is characterized by political indoctrination towards radical pacifism. Sometimes resistance is offered by parents within a particular subgroup, especially parents associated with the military system (cf Brock-Utne's discussion of "political mathematics"). A peace educator dealing with the values of non-violent conflict resolution and global perspectives may be

regarded as "unpatriotic" in the parent groups, especially of course in times of international tension or war involvement (cf the viewpoints by Priscilla Prutzman in Part 2). When peace education is developed within a clearly progressive framework, parents used to a stricter teacher-regulated schooling might find the situation strange and chaotic. Some quotations from the interviews follow as illustrations.

"My old school was very progressive – it had no state examination, for example, because we felt that examination is not a good educational aim. We worked in a way that many parents did not like, because they were used to the traditional school. What happened when they came and saw the school? They were really upset sometimes. They might say: 'This is chaos.' But they did not take their child out of school, because the child was happy there, and a good parent never takes a kid away from where it is happy. So when peace education is really working well, I think we will have an education that the children enjoy and that the parents accept, even if they do not agree." (Robert Aspeslagh.)

"I can tell you about a long debate we had in Norway concerning 'political mathematics'. In connection with the group I mentioned earlier, which was to prepare Norway's participation in the 1980 World Disarmament Congress, we had a seminar to develop proposals for concrete teaching strategies. We divided ourselves into smaller groups to concentrate on different levels. One group of teachers produced a very ambitious teaching plan for adolescents; it involved integrating social studies and mathematics, and they wanted to try it out in the schools. One of the many assignments for the pupils was to find out what one could buy, and what one could do in their immediate neighborhood in the way of child care centers, recreation centers, and so on, with the amount of money required to purchase one F-16 fighter aircraft. The program functioned extremely well at one of the schools. At another, it produced an outcry. That school was located in a conservative neighborhood with a high socio-economic standard among the parents, and one father in particular (who had a high rank in the military establishment) made an issue out of it, and took it to the Norwegian parliament. There was a protracted debate in the newspapers about 'political mathematics', involving teachers who attacked it and teachers who defended it, parents who attacked it, etc. The last chapter consisted of a letter written by the pupils in the class in question. They wrote that they were mature enough to be able to evaluate the teaching they were subjected to (this was in grade 9), and that they resided in an area where they received a lot of

indoctrination at home, and that a little exposure to other viewpoints might be good. Furthermore, they wrote, the teachers had taken a very balanced approach, the students were very satisfied, and that was the opinion of the entire class. And they added a postscript: 'This letter has not been read by a single adult before we sent it'." (Birgit Brock-Utne.)

"Debra, whom you met yesterday and who is the first grade teacher I have been working with, has made it an option for children to salute the flag. They don't have to pledge allegiance to the U.S.A., but they can pledge allegiance to the Earth. That led to reactions from some parents in the community that she was an atheist, that she wasn't patriotic enough and that basically she was an anarchist. So I'm definitely aware that parents can be quite apprehensive about some of the things we do in the classroom. I have also been aware that there are lots of difficult issues you have to deal with. For example, when the Persian Gulf War was going on, and there were children in the classroom whose parents, uncles or aunts were actually soldiers in the Gulf, it was very difficult to conduct peace education in the classroom that didn't make those relatives look bad. It is a real challenge in the classroom to say: 'We are against violence, we don't want war', but to make sure at the same time that those children whose relatives are actually in the military don't feel alienated." (Petra Hesse.)

"I think that people are worried about indoctrination. They won't be so worried about violence. They are worried about frightening children. I think parents and teachers are worried about their own unspoken fears and, in fact, about their own inability to deal with this problem area. I think the very act of introducing peace education is an act of social change, and any kind of social change will meet with some resistance. It's a great responsibility, and one must be responsible in doing it." (Nigel Young.)

Resistance from colleagues. Teachers who have been pioneers in education for peace have often come under suspicion in one way or another. The two most common methods seem to be calling those who work along those lines "naive" ("blue-eyed", "unrealistic" etc.) or "politically unreliable". In the U.S., the stamp of "communist" has frequently been used; the corresponding association with "leftist extremism" may be encountered elsewhere as well. Nowadays, after the end of the Cold War, this way of casting suspicion on colleagues has probably become less frequent. Instead, teachers may take the attitude that education for peace is too emotional and "wishy-washy" and that peace projects take too much time from the more "solid" teaching that is focused on the basic skills. In several respects, the

resistance from some of the teachers' colleagues are based on the same kind of reasoning that we have dealt with above when talking about resistance from parents.

Lack of training. Teachers who would like to get involved in education for peace may of course feel that they lack the knowledge necessary to work in this area. Normally, little interest has been devoted to these issues in their basic teacher education, and the possibilities for in-service education in this area are usually very limited. This lack of education and experience can be a great obstacle, especially since the field is often regarded as being emotionally sensitive and controversial. (Cf the results of a special questionnaire study on teacher training in relation to peace education in schools: Bjerstedt, 1994a.)

"School structure" as an obstacle. Peace issues are markedly interdisciplinary; and student-run, interdisciplinary projects play an important part in an ambitious education for peace. The traditional character of schoolwork (with rather fixed boundaries between the various subjects – at least among the older students – written tests and frequent grading) may be experienced as an obstructive straitjacket in such work. We sometimes distinguish between "explicit" peace education (teaching more directly about peace and war issues) and "implicit" peace education (where we try to foster peaceable values and attitudes, for example, via a democratic, "peaceful" mini-society in the school). While the "explicit" mode of peace education may be more easily fit into the traditional "school structure", it may sometimes be quite difficult to create "the peaceful context" that would be an important prerequisite for a successful "implicit" strategy.

Part of this problem complex is the low frequency of *genuine dialogue* in the traditional school settings. Magnus Haavelsrud formulated it in the following way in his interview reply: "The main problem is how to use some of the time at school for dialogue. That is beyond the concept of education that is predominant at school. When you mention it, people immediately suspect that here is someone who is going to indoctrinate someone about something, but I think this is the new kind of effort that is required in our society in order to make people more dialogue-oriented, to enhance the free exchange of ideas in school. ...We should be democratic, which means that everybody should participate, so it should really be quite simple to legitimize this way of working, and indeed it is on the theoretical level. But in practical everyday life, school is not organized according to that principle...".

Lack of knowledge. Could it be that it is not only the individual teacher who feels that he or she lacks knowledge, but that, on the whole, we know too little about the best ways of educating for peace in different subjects and at different levels? My own feeling, as commentator, is that there is a great need for research and development in this field to give us a more solid and diversified base for recommendations. At the same time, we do have some knowledge and some experience in this field, and we have good reasons to use this, for example, in teacher training, textbook writing, and dialogue with various "resistance groups".

3.

It is important for teachers who want to get involved in peace-oriented education to be conscious of the existence of difficulties and obstacles of the kind that have been referred to here and that may come up in various contexts. Being aware of the difficulties makes us already better equipped to encounter them. In addition, however, it should be useful to listen to experiences and suggestions from others in the field on the theme "Do you see any way out of such difficulties?" In this section I will both quote from the interviews and give some more general comments related to this aspect.

There is nothing much the teacher can do about the international political tradition. There is, however, a pedagogical task that some of our peace-oriented teachers might take on outside school, that is attempting to curtail the stereotyped thinking concerning these issues in the general debate by writing to the newspapers, criticizing the biased arguments and pointing out the need for alternative solutions.

As far as the potential resistance from parents is concerned, there is a lot that can be done, and several of our interviewees address this topic. One strategy is to provide information about what is expected from the teachers in this area, demonstrating what is said in this respect in international recommendations as well as in the national curricula (where this is relevant). This may be called the *"strategy of legitimizing"*:

"I wrote an article on legitimizing peace education... It was obviously high time to look squarely at what had been said about peace education by UNESCO and in the curriculum. That article has subsequently been reissued many times, and used at parents' meetings. Informing parents is one of the best ways to get things done. You show them what is expected of teachers by the United Nations and by the curriculum guidelines and you solicit

their suggestions on how to go about the teaching. That is usually a good beginning, and at the same time, you are probably helping to add nuances to public opinion." (Birgit Brock-Utne.)

Another strategy that is both basic and flexible is what we might call the *"dialogue strategy"*. This can be used both with parents and with other potential "resistance groups" and it can take several different forms.

"One of the ways that we have used is to find the people who show resistance or uneasiness or who disagree and bring them right into the planning-group – bring them into the work with developing curriculum materials, to listen to their message. What are your problems with our approach? We try to use the viewpoints, honor them, give them dignity. We are then modelling peace education in our relationships, honoring the questions of the opponents, respecting their feelings. If we don't listen to the opponents, in fact, we perform an act of violence. So this strategy can be seen as an important part of peace education." (Susan Alexander.)

"A project in the United States, in which I am involved specifically pairs people with opposing views, hawks and doves, to see if there aren't things they can agree on in common, social values that would be related to a security policy. – Another project in the United States is called 'Project Listen'. You go to the people who are the most hostile to your values, usually about war and peace issues. You interview them and just listen to what they have to say; but you interview them in such a way that they kind of talk themselves around to seeing things in more depth than they did when they started. I think respect for the other person – willingness to take time, willingness to listen and communicating at a different level than the highly confrontational one that usually is used – is very important. That kind of listening needs to be done, and it can be done. But it's very slow and it takes a lot of patience. ...I think peace education needs to take more account of that kind of work." (Elise Boulding.)

Related to the dialogue attempt is the *"strategy of starting from the needs of the other person"*.

"The parents would often love for the children to be more self-confident, more able to solve their own conflicts and not be involved in so many quarrels, so one way to start is to emphasize these aspects, dealing with conflicts in their own school." (Mildred Masheder.)

"Our idea of conflict resolution is that you deal with conflict in a way that respects people. That approach can apply to controversial issues. You need to introduce such issues in a very careful and sensitive way, and to

begin where your constituency is. In New York, we asked the teachers what area they wanted to work with. They were concerned about interpersonal conflict in their classrooms primarily, so that's were we started, but then we can build on that and proceed to other areas." (Tom Roderick.)

Since "indoctrination" has been a key concept in many attacks on peace education efforts, it may be of value to stress that the procedures used are quite different from indoctrination (the "strategy of *emphasizing pluralism and anti-indoctrination").*

"I think parents ought to be assured that their children are not going to be indoctrinated into some kind of political doctrine. ...An educational attitude is to help young people think clearly and deeply about the issues and would want to assure parents that if you are engaged in peace education in the school, that you will not simply put across one particular view and expect all your students to accept that. That to me is somehow the opposite of peace education." (James Collinge.)

"I think it's very important when you introduce these issues that you avoid pushing any one solution or any narrow political agenda. It has to be a real solid educational process with a long-range perspective. ...What we want to develop is first: people who care about what's going on in the world, and second: people who are able to think about it in a constructive are thorough way, so that they make up their own minds. I think that if that's what you're really doing – then, in most places you won't run into too much trouble; and if you do, you're having an honest fight: you aren't vulnerable in a moral or educational sense." (Tom Roderick.)

If there is a climate of mistrust related to peace education programs, it may be worthwhile to introduce a *series of activities aiming at "confidence building".*

"...peace education was confronted with mistrust... This was inspired by the fear of partiality, one-sided information and hidden objectives. It had to do with fixed political opinions, and it was also related to the predominant view that education should be neutral. We have responded to this problem in several ways: a) By explaining very clearly our concept as well as our objectives of peace education. b) By elaborating the teaching materials in cooperation with teachers/schools; those materials were first reviewed by the educational authorities and tested in a number of schools, and only then were they published and distributed. c) By providing well-balanced and comprehensive information, and by presenting different opinions and interpretations. d) By creating conditions, by means of a didactic method, for an

open process of opinion formation, with the emphasis on the pupils' own reasoned choices." (Henk B. Gerritsma.)

Let me try to summarize some of the relevant arguments and action strategies in dealing with difficulties encountered in peace education work. As far as the potential resistance from parents is concerned, it should be a good rule to try to prevent unnecessary misunderstandings about intentions and methods by informing the group of parents in advance and trying to enlist them as collaborators (instead of having them as opponents) in the peace work.

Genuine peace education is based on mutual communication, on a dialogue. This applies to the internal school work, but it also applies to teachers' contacts with adults outside school. An example mentioned in the quotations was "Project Listen", where exhaustive conversations with opponents are conducted, emphasizing the importance of deeper understanding rather than trying to score points in a simple confrontation. It is obviously not a quick and uncomplicated method, but in the long run it may prove to be of great importance.

As for resistance from colleagues, an open discussion is likely to be the best counter-method. It is also important for us to find allies among our colleagues, even before work is initiated. Two or more people do a better job of planning something, and in addition, they can give each other psychological support.

It may be natural to emphasize here that peace-oriented education is a many-faceted task encompassing many different subgoals and many different methods. As a matter of fact, large parts of this work tend to be quite uncontroversial, for example providing the pupils with knowledge of actual conditions, or helping them to give priority to non-violent solutions when dealing with personal conflicts. As long as teachers work with such parts of education for peace, hardly anybody is likely to object.

But when we approach what UNESCO has called "disarmament education" more directly, the topic may be experienced as being delicate and controversial, i.e. when the value of military armament is questioned and violent solutions in the international arena are discussed. It should be of great help to the teachers involved if they discuss and decide together *what* they want to take up and *how*.

It may also be important to think through the terminology to be used in dealing with such issues at school. Several of our interviewees discuss this,

pointing out that words like "peace" or "peace education" often give rise to opposition, while the same phenomena can be more easily discussed under other labels. Some of the people we interviewed feel that the cause is the important thing, and that sometimes it may be wise to restrict oneself to a cautious terminology, while there are others who think that the pedagogical task should also include the creation of positive associations to the word "peace". Personally I think there is a lot to be said for the last-mentioned view. In the long perspective, we should include this goal. However, this does not force us always to use this terminology from the very start. Hence, the two views are not necessarily irreconcilable.

An alarming problem is the large pile of super weapons – including the risk of using them by mistake. The end of the Cold War has meant that this threat is no longer focused upon to the same extent, but the risks have not yet disappeared. It should be comparatively easy to make many people accept that this is an undesirable situation which does not contribute to global security.

It may also be important to clarify that the goal is "real security". What is now often called "security" (that is a high degree of armament) is largely a "pseudo-security", and we must find "alternative forms of security" characterized by a lesser risk of death and destruction. In this context, some people prefer to talk about "rearmament" rather than "disarmament". It should also be emphasized, in this connection, that today's world is different from that of the past. We now live in a world of strong mutual dependence, and there are many transnational problems that we have to solve together. The narrow national perspective of yesterday does not work any longer.

Should we then be allowed to go ahead at school and discuss the defense of our country and its military policy? Should we – for example – in Swedish school be allowed to question Swedish exports of weapons? Should we allow critical opinions on the degree of Swedish armament? May we discuss alternative ways of protecting our country? Should we also allow pacifist arguments and arguments for non-combatant military service?

There are diffent opinions. My own answer is: Yes, we *may* and *should* take up such issues. In an open, democratic society, all essential societal issues should be discussed at school. Our students in the upper secondary school – who are greatly affected by these issues – should have the chance to listen to arguments from people with different attitudes. Teachers should be allowed to state their opinions openly, whether they happen to be in

favour of the traditional defence, or pacifist, or ambivalent.

Peace education is part of the general task of school of making the pupils active and democratic citizens who can participate actively and critically in the process of shaping our future, including the politics of peace. Such a goal requires access to relevant arguments.

But teachers should, of course, also be aware of the fact that such open discussions do not appeal to everybody, and that it is wise to try to win the support of parents, colleagues and school administrators in advance, if possible, when a major educational project involving such controversial issues is being planned.

PART II

Susan Alexander (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA)

Yes, not only do we anticipate such difficulties. We have experienced them for years: difficulties in trying to introduce education about these issues. One of the difficulties is that in the United States you have a million different special-interest groups, and each one has its own little cause, and they all want to see them included in the school. There will be local pressure groups telling the local school boards: You have to teach about drugs. You have to teach about teenage pregnancy. You have to teach about AIDS etc. etc. The school board learns to resist: We cannot do all this. – Another difficulty is, of course, that peace education is seen as controversial.
ÅB: What is your organization's way of handling this?
SA: One of the ways that we have used is to find the people who show resistance or uneasiness or who disagree and bring them right into the planning-group – bring them into the work with developing curriculum materials, to listen to their message. What are your problems with our approach? We try to use the viewpoints, honor them, give them dignity. We are then modelling peace education in our relationships, honoring the questions of the opponents, respecting their feelings. If we don't listen to the opponents, in fact, we perform an act of violence. So this strategy can be seen as an important part of peace education.

Robert Aspeslagh (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

The main problem is political. The accusations of the conservatives have sometimes been quite severe. When you ask: "Do you see a way out of such problems?", I would say yes, just continue. Develop your own thoughts in your own way, and don't defend yourself, because there is no need for that. You don't convert these conservatives, because they feel threatened by peace education. The only thing you can do is to do your job as well as possible and to convert the indifferent people.
ÅB: But would there be problems with parents who are not so convinced and might be misled by the qeneral discussion?
RA: My old school was very progressive – it had no state examination, for example, because we felt that examination is not a good educational aim.

We worked in a way that many parents did not like, because they were used to the traditional school. What happened when they came and saw the school? They were really upset sometimes. They might say: "This is chaos." But they did not take their child out of school, because the child was happy there, and a good parent never takes a kid away from where it is happy. So when peace education is really working well, I think we will have an education that the children enjoy and that the parents accept, even if they do not agree.

Anima Bose (New Delhi, India)

I have met this situation in the United States. For example, when I have been given lectures to church groups. And I have experienced it in West Germany where I have been visiting. But in India I have not faced it. Indians are very traditional and tend to respect what is done in the school. If the school is giving a particular course, they will take it without questioning it. Also Gandhi's name is very important in India, and he is associated with peace and non-violence unambiguously.

Elise Boulding (Boulder, Colorado, USA)

Certainly we have many such difficulties in many countries. It depends a little on the community. In the communities our family has happened to live in, there has been less antagonism to it than in others, partly because they have been academic communities. There has been a university in the town, and that means that you have a somewhat more literate and liberal community. But I am very conscious of the people who are seeing a communist under every bed or behind every bush; I know what that is like. I think a very careful respectful dialogue has to go on with people who hold those attitudes. I think it's a great mistake to say: Well, let's go around and talk to people who will listen to me. A project in the United States, in which I am involved specifically pairs people with opposing views, hawks and doves, to see if there aren't some things they can agree on in common, in terms of social values that would be related to a security policy.

Another project in the United States, is called "Project Listen". You go to the people who are the most hostile to your values, usually about war and

peace issues. You interview them and just listen to what they have to say; but you interview them in such a way that they kind of talk themselves around to seeing things in more depth than they did when they started. I think respect for the other person – willingness to take time, willingness to listen and then communicating at a different level than the highly confrontational one that usually is used – is very important. That kind of listening needs to be done, and it can be done. But it's very slow and it takes a lot of patience. We have in our culture in the United States a wish to get quick solutions to everything. The process I am describing takes a lot of time with no guaranteed outcome of a particular kind, except that you are just going to have better relations for getting on with things in the future. I think peace education needs to take more account of that kind of work.

Birgit Brock-Utne (Oslo, Norway)

Yes, we can undoubtedly count on such difficulties. As an example, I can tell you about a long debate we had in Norway concerning "political mathematics". In connection with the group I mentioned earlier, which was to prepare Norway's participation in the 1980 World Disarmament Congress, we had a seminar to develop proposals for concrete teaching strategies. We divided ourselves into smaller groups to concentrate on different levels. One group of teachers produced a very ambitious teaching plan for adolescents; it involved integrating social studies and mathematics, and they wanted to try it out in the schools. One of many assignments for the pupils was to find out what one could buy, and what one could do in their immediate neighborhood in the way of child care centers, recreation centers, and so on, with the amount of money required to purchase one F-16 fighter aircraft. The program functioned extremely well at one of the schools. At another, it produced an outcry. That school was located in a conservative neighborhood with a high socio-economic standard among the parents, and one father in particular (who had a high rank in the military establishment) made an issue out of it, and took it to the Norwegian parliament. There was a protracted debate in the newspapers about "political mathematics", involving teachers who attacked it and teachers who defended it, parents who attacked it, etc. The last chapter consisted of a letter written by the pupils in the class in question. They wrote that they were mature enough to be able to evaluate the teaching they were subjected to (this was in grade 9), and

t'.at they resided in an area where they received a lot of indoctrination at home, and that a little exposure to other viewpoints might be good. Furthermore, they wrote, the teachers had taken a very balanced approach, the students were very satisfied, and that was the opinion of the entire class. And they added a postscript: "This letter has not been read by a single adult before we sent it."

Following that episode, I wrote an article on legitimizing peace education ("Legitimering av arbeidet med nedrustningsundervisning i det norske utdanningsverk" /"Legitimizing the Pursuit of Disarmament Studies in Norwegian Education"/, Forsøksnytt, 1982, no. 4-5, 91-103). It was obviously high time to look squarely at what had been said about peace education by UNESCO and in the curriculum. That article has subsequently been reissued many times, and used at parents' meetings. Informing parents is one of the best ways to get things done. You show them what is expected of teachers by the United Nations and by the curriculum guidelines and you solicit their suggestions on how to go about the teaching. That is usually a good beginning, and at the same time, you are probably helping to add nuances to public opinion.

Robin Burns (Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia)

Yes, there are such problems. This is partly in response to world events and Australia's relations to the United States. Particularly since the New Zealand government refused to accept even potentially nuclear armed ships in its ports, there has been a lot of emphasis on the importance of the American alliance, and recent surveys have shown that support for that alliance has increased in our area. Some people feel that peace education is a threat to this alliance. The conservatives got hold of the debate going on in Britain and immediately started making people in Australia afraid via articles in newpapers and all sorts of places, challenging anyone in peace education, almost calling them traitors, and accused them of indoctrinating children.
ÅB: Do you think that parents would also be influenced by this discussion?
RB: They are influenced. When it's explained to them they are not so worried, however. The experience of many of the teachers I worked with is that when you say, that you want to talk about peace education in school, parents are often upset and worried. But when you sit down and discuss what that means, then you often get a much more positive response.

In 1977 a very old regulation that said that teachers should not raise controversial political or religious issues in the classroom was changed. It is now rather seen as an obligation of teachers to treat such issues so long as they present a range of views and are not trying to indoctrinate the children. I think that students should be encouraged to debate different points of view. That is good education.

ÅB: Are there any official texts recommending peace education in the schools?

RB: Two years ago the government passed what has become known as Ministerial Statement No. 6, which includes teaching about issues of war and peace as one of the obligations in the school.

ÅB: Is that a federal recommendation?

RB: No, it is only a Victoria State text; the Federal government has no mandate to do anything about education.

ÅB: Would the other states also have similar texts?

RB: No, Victoria has gone further than the other states, partly because of a special relationship with the teacher unions that have given positive support to the government and vice versa. Another way in which new support is coming is through a national curriculum development unit. The way it operates is severely limited by the states. For example, at least two states must give a high priority rating to the things they want done. They are working on some useful materials. If they are requested they can respond with projects and materials, but not with policy statements.

ÅB: What do you call this unit?

RB: The Curriculum Development Centre. It was set up by the previous Labor government in 1973. When the Liberals came back in, they abolished it, but it has been reorganized again and brought into being again in the last couple of years.

ÅB: Where is that situated?

RB: In Canberra. It is part of the Federal Department of Education.

James Calleja (Valletta, Malta)

One of the problems of peace education in the Mediterranean area has always been related to the fact that peace has very much been associated with politics. It would be more agreeable to parents, more acceptable to our children and to our authorities, if we *do not* correlate peace with politics.

The difficulties arise when this correlation takes place. If we remain on the level of values, then the problems will be less. This is one of the reasons why we are working very hard on a concept of peace as communication, cooperation and confidence building. Difficulties arise if people think that we are trying to create a sort of new form of political or religious movement, since it is the politician or/and the "religious" person who normally speak about peace.

Terry Carson (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

Yes, there would be some difficulties. Parents would be concerned about their children being frightened by information about the arms race and about the dangers of nuclear war – and not without reason. We should be very hesitant about giving young children too much information about global problems. My friend Lennart Vriens in Holland, who has done a lot of work with children and peace education says: "Why give children problems that adults can't solve?" I agree with him. We have to be very careful about making children feel guilty about problems adults have caused.

ÅB: Would this be the only kind of apprehension that Canadian parents would have with respect to peace education?

TC: No, I think *some* parents would certainly be concerned about making children into pacifists.

ÅB: How would you deal with the issue of pacifism in peace education?

TC: It depends on the age level. But I think at a number of different levels you can introduce pacifism as a philosophy and as a legitimate way of thinking about questions of peace and war. I think it would be very good to look at the lives of Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, and to study the Quakers. There is a long history of pacifism in the world, and we shouldn't hide that. I think you have to assure parents that we are responsible educators first of all. They have to see peace education first as being good education. There has been some teaching in the name of peace education, a couple of years ago, that I would not consider good education. It just made people frightened. Of course, the intention was to frighten people into action of a particular kind. But I think that was not very well thought through psychologically or educationally.

James Collinge (Wellington, New Zealand)

They *are* controversial, but to me an education that does not deal with important controversial issues, as I said before, is deficient. An educated person, I think, must be able to think about and deal with these controversial questions. Within New Zealand, the notion of dealing with controversial questions, particularly within the social sciences or social studies within schools, is well recognized, but perhaps not done as much in schools as it should be. There is no question, though, that many teachers I have spoken to are very concerned about the opposition from parents and from other members of the community. In 1987 in New Zealand, when we had a general election, the controversial questions of peace and nuclear questions became part of the election debate, and there were groups – such as a group called The Coalition for Concerned Citizens – which distributed anti-peace-education literature.

I think that parents ought to be assured that their children are not going to be indoctrinated into some kind of political doctrine. Indoctrination, of course, would be the opposite of peace education anyway. Parents need to be assured that you are not going to bring a particular point of view across to the students. I found that this in Britain is a very important question, where peace education became very much linked with unilateral nuclear disarmament at least in the minds of many people and with opposition to British involvement in NATO. Peace education was simply seen as a kind of branch of the campaign for nuclear disarmament rather than helping people to think.

I would want to make a distinction between peace education, which is concerned with developing critical thought, and the very proper activities of the peace movement. A peace movement has a particular line to get across and the peace activists can use any methods they like to get it across. As someone who has been involved very much in the peace movements over the years, I have been involved in that sort of exercise. I think that is fine, but that is not an educational attitude. An educational attitude is to help young people to think clearly and deeply about the issues and I would want to assure parents that if you are engaged in peace education in the school, that you will not simply put across one particular view and expect all your students to accept that. That to me is somehow the opposite of peace education.

The way out of the problem I think is that you must always work in

collaboration with the parents, and you must always be honest about what you are doing and try to bring parents as much as possible into the debate, tell them what you are doing. Parents should have the opportunity to express their views, and you should bring them as much as possible into the process.

Thomas Daffern (London, England)

I don't think so really. However, one has to be pretty sensitive to possible difficulties like that and think about various reactions in advance and not be seen to or want to come at this whole question from a partisan or narrow base. I mean, education is not about indoctrination or a party-line approach, it's about creating a space for discourse and for the learning-process. If you do your work well in a comprehensive way, then I think parents and children would both benefit from what you can do. I think also you should try to tailor the approach to the needs of the community. Obviously if you are teaching a class of tin miners in Bolivia, you can deal with it very differently than when working with a group of middle-class children in Britain.
ÅB: Some years ago I felt that in Britain there were fairly fierce discussions in the British press about peace education. The message from conservatives seemed to be that peace education was something you shouldn't deal with. Is that still true?
TD: In a sense yes. However, I would argue that the debate has become more sophisticated. Even people on the right have realized that actually you do need it. I've had "support" for the university project from people that I would have thought to be hostile to the whole project. They seem to realize that they need the expertise that has been built up on violence, for instance, when dealing with some of the traditional concerns of the right. Actually the peace educators have strategies and ways of dealing with and understanding conflicts which are useful. The peace educator even can reeducate the educators of the right! In a sense these questions still are controversial, but I would hope they could be dealt with in a creative way, in a way that gets people to think. The problem is when you get blocked and say: There are two positions, black or white, you are either for or against. Now, however, I think we more often get the reaction: There is an area here that is worth looking at and that one can approach in different ways.

Morton Deutsch (New York, USA)

There are a number of political problems that sometimes arise. Right-wing people, particularly the radical right in the U.S., have tried to identify concern with peace and peace education with a left-wing position; it has been considered "bad", "communism" and so on. So you have that problem. I think that the way you deal with that problem is to talk about the fact that teamwork, cooperation in community, family life and so on are essential and long established traditions in American culture. For individuals to be able to succeed and for groups and corporations to be able to succeed, they have to have considerable skills in cooperation and know how to manage conflict, and that's one of the key points.

ÅB: Would you consider disarmament education as part of peace education, and would that perhaps be particularly difficult to handle in school?

MD: My conception of peace education would be that disarmament education is one part dealing with the discussion of the issues involved in disarmament, arms control, military weapons – all of those complicated issues. This part does not belong in the elementary schools in my view. It involves a higher level of sophistication and special knowledge of many issues, knowledge of physics, international relations and legal processes.

Virginia Floresca-Cawagas (Quezon City, The Philippines)

In our country, peace education came much later than the peace movement groups. Peace education and the peace educators are a well respected group in our academic community, so we have not had any difficulty so far. In that respect we have been very fortunate which helps to catalyze the spread of education and action for peace. A controversy right now is that our Department of Education has issued an executive order making values education a priority, and many of the administrators and teachers feel that bringing in values education is another of those impositions or prescriptions from above. Some peace educators feel that peace education should be emphasized more rather than a broad unfocused values education program. But I think that since values education covers a wide range of universal values, there should be no conflict between peace education and values education.

ÅB: So there haven't been any problems with parents or community mem-

bers, which is the case in some countries,where peace education is felt to be very controversial?
VFC: No, none that I know of. It is probably because peace in the Philippines is a national vision – one that unifies our people. Of course there are major differences in our means but in the schools, educating for peace is seen not only as a curricular innovation but a necessity to our survival.

Celina Garcia (San José, Costa Rica)

In Costa Rica, people want more materials, more speakers etc. in this area. That would be the only difficulty that I have met. I've never heard of parents or others who don't want it. I'm sure there are some, but I've never heard of anybody. It isn't controversial in the same way as I know it is in Europe.

Henk B. Gerritsma & Daan Verbaan (Groningen, The Netherlands)

DV: I don't believe that you should introduce peace education in school as a subject. It is more important to implement different themes of the peace and war problems in different school subjects. For example, the problem of chemical weapons can be well attuned to school chemistry.

You could say that debating peace and war problems has always been a controversial issue. Therefore you have to prepare your lessons well before you start a project about these problems. First you have to be sure that your information is clear and that there is room for different opinions. Sometimes parents are very anxious about indoctrination. Accusations of indoctrination have to be taken seriously, that is, teachers have to be open to discussions.
HG: Education on political conflicts and problems is controversial in different ways. First of all until the mid-eighties, peace education was confronted with mistrust of its objectives; especially with regard to themes like security policy. This was inspired by the fear of partiality, one-sided information and hidden objectives. It had to do with fixed political opinions, and it was also related to the predominant view that education should be neutral. We have responded to this problem in several ways: a) By explaining very clearly our concept as well as our objectives of peace edu-

cation. b) By elaborating the teaching materials in cooperation with teachers/schools; those materials were first reviewed by the educational authorities and tested in a number of schools, and only then were they published and distributed. c) By providing well-balanced and comprehensive information, and by presenting different opinions and interpretations. d) By creating conditions, by means of a didactic method, for an open process of opinion formation, with the emphasis on the pupils' own reasoned choices. We did not say that peace education is neutral, because it is biased, like the teaching of all social subjects.

Other criticism is related to the fear that pupils will feel helpless and pessimistic if confronted with threatening political conflicts and problems. The question is raised whether it is pedagogically justifiable to deal with these conflicts and problems in the classroom. We have taken these apprehensions into account by emphasizing (a) clarifying analysis, and not terrifying information, (b) the possibilities of and proposals for peaceful control, conflict resolution and reduction, and the attempts made to realize these.

Another difficulty in this connection has been the limited interest and involvement of adolescents in politics. We have taken this into account: a) by attempting to translate these problems into the world of the pupils as much as possible, in close cooperation with teachers. b) by emphasizing a pupil-directed didactic method, which appeals to their personal activity and involvement.

In our work we have been confronted with *two other restrictions*. On the one hand, there is the problem that an adequate handling of political conflicts and problems places high demands upon teachers. Experience has proved that they need substantial didactic training and support, especially because these issues received relatively little attention in teacher training until the late seventies. On the other hand, there is little or no room for peace education as a new subject, and the possibilities of the curricula of the school subjects to deal with questions of political conflicts and problems are limited. Hence, peace education should not be propagated as a new subject, but the objectives should be integrated in the existing curricula and textbooks.

Haim Gordon (Ber-Sheva, Israel)

Most parents, even some left-wing parents, would say: Until we are ensured of Israel's right to exist, we are unwilling to endorse in any meaningful fashion what you call peace education. First comes our survival. They do have a point there about the security of the country. What I would answer – and what I have answered several times in my writings – is that the only way to live securely would be in peace.

What has happened lately might be an indication that a number of people in Israel are tired of the old Government's way of handling these problems. They do want some sort of opening for peace, and hence there could be a change.

But at present peace education in our country is limited to particular environments. It might be some progressive public schools, where the principals are progressive and take some risks. Parents who do not want their children to undergo that kind of thing would simply choose another public school. Things like that happen, but there is not much being done.

Magnus Haavelsrud (Tromsø, Norway)

The main problem is how to use some of the time at school for dialogue. That is beyond the concept of education that is predominant at school. When you mention it, people immediately suspect that here is someone who is going to indoctrinate someone about something, but I think this is the new kind of effort that is required in our society in order to make people more dialogue-oriented, to enhance the free exchange of ideas in school. We must ask ourselves whether school is the right place to start. We should be democratic, which means that everybody should participate, so it should really be quite simple to legitimize this way of working, and indeed it is on the theoretical level. But in practical everyday life, school is not organized according to that principle, and the lack of a school debate on that question is a major issue in our country.

ÅB: Is it still considered controversial in Norway to deal with questions of war and peace?

MH: Yes, since pacifism is controversial. A twelve-year-old may say: I'll never go to war, because I don't want to use weapons. Then another twelve-year-old says the same thing, and eventually the whole class agrees. That is

not a totally unrealistic scenario for dialogic group activity. That would be viewed as complicated in Norway today.

ÅB: How do you think such a question should be handled, then?

MH: I think the idealism we often find in children and adolescents must also be confronted with the entire reality we are surrounded with. All the arguments that are used in our social debate should be included. If necessary, we must invite guests from outside, or other pupils at school. A comprehensive discussion is a good thing. We should deal with controversial topics the way a good journalist would. That may be a guideline for the teacher.

Ian M. Harris (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA)

There is an attempt in this country to downplay the controversies surrounding peace education. This attempt is seen in promoting the term "nuclear age education". As I indicated before, I think basically that's a mistake. When I first offered my peace education course, I was wildly attacked by business leaders here in Milwaukee. They attempted to get at me through the university. But I was defended by a university which honors the traditions of academic freedom. I think basically we who are promoting peace education, have to be aware that what we are doing is not "value neutral", that it is controversial, and we have to be willing to face controversy. We are trying to mould the minds of our students in more peaceful directions, and those who embrace violence will be threatened by these activities. Teachers, like all human beings, seek approval. I think we have to "bite the bullet" and accept the inevitability of conflict and take the highest moral road we can, promoting peace education. I think that's a dilemma that all teachers face. Not everybody is going to approve, but that's all right. I should go ahead and do it anyway, because it's the right thing to do.

Dealing with some of the controversies surrounding peace education, I would tell my principal I am going to do it. I would inform faculty. I would try to schedule part of a faculty meeting where I would explain what I am trying to do and why it's important, and I would – if I am working with teachers – try to prepare them for dealing with controversy. I wouldn't be naive about it.

Petra Hesse (Boston, Massachusetts, USA)

Let me tell you an anecdote in response to that: Debra, whom you met yesterday and who is the first grade teacher I have been working with, has made it an option for children to salute the flag. They don't have to pledge allegiance to the U.S.A., but they can pledge allegiance to the Earth. That led to reactions from some parents in the community that she was an atheist, that she wasn't patriotic enough and that basically she was an anarchist. So I'm definitely aware that parents can be quite apprehensive about some of the things we do in the classroom. I have also been aware that there are lots of difficult issues you have to deal with. For example, when the Persian Gulf War was going on, and there were children in the classroom whose parents, uncles or aunts were actually soldiers in the Gulf, it was very difficult to conduct peace education in the classroom that didn't make those relatives look bad. It is a real challenge in the classroom to say: "We are against violence, we don't want war", but to make sure at the same time that those children whose relatives are actually in the military don't feel alienated.

I think the way we try to deal with such issues is by talking to parents and other teachers about their ideals and, I think, by talking to people about the fact that nobody wants war, nobody wants their children to be exposed to war; everybody believes in democratic, non-violent solutions to conflicts. I think we've been quite successful in appealing both to parents and to other teachers at that level, and in acknowledging that historically there have been times when it has been very hard to use peaceful means of conflict resolution.

But I think it can also be an interesting chance to make children in the classroom aware that different people have different opinions about war. During the Gulf War we could acknowledge in the classroom that some adults strongly believe that the war was the right thing, but at the same time there were plenty of other people who believed that you shouldn't go to war under any circumstances. There are groups out there that we disagree with. At the same time it should be part of our ideal not to turn them into our enemy but to keep talking with them and maybe to encourage a more peaceful exchange of views. But it's definitely difficult.

David Hicks (Bath, England)

That was certainly the case in the mid 80s in England, partly because the Right-wing press and Right-wing politicians argued that peace education was about nuclear disarmament and this made good headlines. The politicians from the Right and the newspapers made a big fuss about such things at that time.

I spent a lot of time during the 80s talking to teachers and governors. I explained that when we talk about peace education, we are actually talking about looking at peace and conflict, at human rights, at issues of development and at environmental issues. Many times after a session with teachers or governors, a person would come up and say: "Well, I am so relieved now that I know what peace education is about. Of course I am happy to promote it. I can now argue with people whereas before I was a bit worried. I thought that peace education perhaps was solely promoting nuclear disarmament." So my job was often to bring support to people who had relied too much on sensational newspaper headlines.

ÅB: Do you feel that this is still a problem?

DH: I don't think it's a problem now in the same sense: the nuclear arms race has gone out of the headlines, peace education has gone out of the headlines in England. The educational debate now is about the local management of the schools and about the National Curriculum.

Kathleen Kanet (New York, USA)

Of course there are difficulties because people are fearful and ignorant. My experience includes when I was a principal of a school, and wanted to institute a change, I felt that the greatest need was for communication, dialogue and sharing. If there is an effort to bring in a group of homeless people or some similar group into the community, of course the community is going to be fearful, but I think who ever is doing it, has to start talking to the people, listening to the fears, organizing that kind of communication, dealing with the conflict in the beginning and recognizing that that is part of the process. It works better that way. So that's the only way I see out of the problem. You should not say that I don't have time for that; that's part of the effort. So the parents need to be brought in as much as possible and programs of outreaching should be thought through.

Søren Keldorff (Aalborg, Denmark)

In my own teaching, i.e. at the university and in adult education, the problem of parents worrying about indoctrination does not exist. My students of peace have chosen the subjects themselves, and they have chosen me to teach them. In the Danish elementary school, however, there are great problems of local school boards prohibiting the subject and parents protesting, but there are also many examples to the contrary. I am not the right person to answer that question, but Danish school teachers, for example those in "Teachers for Peace", have a lot to say about it. By the way, I would like to take this opportunity to recommend that you get in touch with Knud Gammelgård, lecturer at the Hjörring School of Education. He and his students have prepared some valuable pedagogical material for the school, and they have also started an organization to distribute information in this field ("The Organization for the Distribution of Knowledge about International Development, Peace and Security").

Herbert C. Kelman (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA)

I have said quite a lot already about that. Some of it relates to the question: Are you frightening the children? But many people who talk in these terms have another agenda, I think. They see the emphasis on nuclear was as a sign of taking too soft a position. The major difficulties that I would expect from parents and other members of the community would be from the more conservative elements who would be concerned that this kind of program might be encouraging a soft line with regard to "enemies of democracy", and they would be inclined to look at the programs as representing propaganda in a particular direction.

Do I see any way out of such problems? Well, I don't see any *easy* way out of such problems. I do think these are serious issues that need to be addressed. I think in part the way out is a kind of pluralism that says: O.K., there are different views on these things. For instance, if you go back to the question of security you can say: Everybody believes in security, but there are different views as to how you provide security for a society. The educational program would then be designed to make sure that the students are exposed to the range of views on the issue. That is one way out.

Now what worries me about that approach is that I don't believe that

everything is equal to everything else. It reminds me of the continuing debate we have had about teaching evolution. There is a relatively small segment of the population that is making an issue of it; but it continues to be an issue, and there have been a number of court cases. One of the solutions that has been proposed is that you give equal time in school to creationism and science. Well, that's a pseudo-solution. I don't want to be proposing that solution when I speak of pluralism. I think one has to take a stand here and say that creationism is not at the same level as evolution. I certainly would want to tell the students (a) that evolution is not a finished doctrine, that science is an open process, and (b) that there are some people who for a variety of reasons do not accept these scientific trends. But I don't think it makes sense to give creationism the same status as evolution.

Similarly, I would think that not every point of view about war and peace deserves equal status – we have to make certain professional judgements. So the pluralist approach, I think, is only a partial solution. I am reflecting the view that part of the problem we have in dealing with questions of war and peace and education about them is our failure to examine critically certain concepts and certain assumptions. That is what I have been stressing throughout my remarks: that we don't sufficiently examine the concept of security or the concept of the nation state. I have a certain ideology; I don't deny that. I am not satisfied with the way in which the world is organized, and I am not satisfied with the way in which we achieve security; that's true. But I think that what I am saying is also part of the essential meaning of social science, which is to examine assumptions about social order and about social ideologies. So I can't really yield on that. I can't say that those who insist that we are not allowed to examine these concepts and assumptions should have equal status with those who insist that we ought to examine them.

In sum, I am saying that one way out is to be pluralistic, but we should be careful not to fall into a kind of a fraudulent pluralism in which we make no judgement about what different positions represent.

ÅB: Don't you think also that another way out might be to try to include an element of public education in discussions of such controversial issues, trying to involve the opponents in clarifying conversations that may get rid of some of the stereotypic thinking in this field?

HK: You are absolutely right, because I think that utimately that is the only way to get away from treating the issue as a strictly political conflict.

Alberto L'Abate (Florence, Italy)

We have had some experiences of such difficulties, not with the relatives, but with the authorities. For example, in Ferrara the authorities did not allow us to enlarge our research to more students. They refused permission because, they said, "Peace is politics and you must not introduce politics in school." So we had to change our research methods. We could not use questionnaires, since we have to ask permission to use these. But we could use compositions, since compositions are part of the regular school work and we do not have to ask permission in that case.

In the same period there was a minister from the central government who said that they should do peace education in school, but maybe they had another idea of peace education than I had.

ÅB: Has there been any general discussion about peace education in the journals?

AL: I do not see any such discussion at the moment, but I must confess that I do not follow the pedagogical journals closely now. I used to do that before when I taught sociology of education.

Linda Lantieri (New York, USA)

I expected some, but we've had none. We have had nothing negative at all, and I think that has been because this was an effort that came from the community. It was a concern of a local school board and we were servants to that concern, so that's one reason. A second reason is because I feel we have focused on the individual point of view, in other words helping young people look at their own lives and helping them learn very practical skills for dealing with that first. Then we bring in more global issues. As a result we have avoided the fear that we have a particular political point of view.

ÅB: Would that also mean that you have avoided taking up controversial issues?

LL: No, not at all, but it hasn't been our emphasis. We have included various controversial issues both about our own history as a country as well as about problems in the world today, but in dealing with them we try primarily to help kids to see the various points of view and help them to clarify their own values and feelings about it and complicate their thinking.

Max Lawson (Armidale, New South Wales, Australia)

I could start with my own experience, introducing our courses on peace at the university level. My course on peace education and my colleague's course on development education were first announced, and the details of the courses were distributed to external students. This material was given to a conservative magazine. In a leading editorial this magazine demanded from the university that such courses should be withdrawn because they were too contentious, they covered too much ground and contained pure indoctrination. Peace education has always been controversial at any level in Australia.

I think the best way of promoting it in schools, is to stress that it deals with ways of breaking down racial prejudice and violence in classrooms, things that no one can object to. Many of its critics in Australia still see it as a course in unilateral disarmament. It is often branded as such.

I think that the most sensible way of dealing with many of these issues in schools is to make sure that there is question time after presentations that may be considered controversial. To give you an example: I teach in a very conservative rural area and for the local high school I was able to have as a visiting lecturer a Sandinista, a member of the Nicaraguan parliament, a Creole woman, who specializes in women's affairs. The very fact that she was allowed to speak at the school shows that things are opening up somewhat after all. It must be stressed that there was half an hour or so of questions afterwards, including some from teachers who were unsympathetic to the regime in Nicaragua, which meant that the program could not be called indoctrination.

My own attitude is that I present material as fairly as I can. I try to have opposing viewpoints presented by myself and by another speaker. I reject the concept of neutrality, so I state briefly what my own views are at the end of the session. As Betty Reardon has remarked being "neutral" is to be without authentic concern for an issue. Even our Department of Education says that the doctrine of neutrality is pernicious, which is an interesting official statement, but it is now considered that if you are adult, you must have some considered opinion on these burning, controversial issues. Teachers may range from extreme right-wing to an extreme left-wing in a comprehensive school. The students will listen to a range of opinions and will have to make their own decisions.

Stig Lindholm (Copenhagen, Denmark; Sweden)

Since I have only taught at university level, this has to be secondhand information. But I gather from the debate in the teachers' publications and some of the daily papers that there are people who believe that peace education aims at making the children into pacifists. First of all, that's not at all what it tries to do, and secondly, I think the role of school as an influencing factor in this area is grossly exaggerated, considering how much education for war our entire culture contains. But I think that you have to expect criticism and listen to it and take a stand on it. It may occasionally be justified. But I think that what I have seen of the debate has been very much exaggerated. There is so much education for war in our culture, for example in the mass media and on video, that a certain amount of counterbalance is needed. I believe you must look at the entire scope of programming available, as they often say at the Broadcasting Committee.
ÅB: One of the opinions that have been propounded in the debate is – to express it a bit clumsily – that you shouldn't frighten young children. Do you have any comment on that?
SL: It goes without saying that I don't think so either. I may occasionally have met the attitude among teachers that "now we must talk about how terrible nuclear weapons are". Of course, you shouldn't conceal reality, but I don't think that is a very good starting-point. I have always been negative to scaremongering; I was against it in connection with the problems of the developing countries as well. I didn't like it very much when a lot of pictures of starving children were shown, because I think that is a bad way of increasing people's interest in the developing countries. Similarly, I believe scaremongering is a bad way of increasing people's interest in peace issues, since there is a risk of causing paralysis and there is already so much in the mass media that tends to paralyze people. I think that people in general realize fairly well that a nuclear war would be hell, quite literally. You don't have to put the stress too much on mega-death . I think the most important thing is to visualize hope.

As you know, there are examples in history of people succeeding in turning a development they found negative around. In our countries, the labor movement is a good example. In 1909, after the general strike had failed, sensible people said that "this is nothing for workers to get involved in". But those who believed in "the impossible" made it possible. The women's movement and the co-operative movement have also made such

achievements. There are, in fact, many types of popular movements that have succeeded, and the best example in our time may be the Action Group against a Swedish Nuclear Bomb. Those people who pondered Swedish nuclear weapons weren't extreme militarists. If I'm correctly informed by the press, Erlander, for example, was one of them. But it was women, both "leftists" and others, who opposed it. Then, assisted by the peace movement, they mobilized opinion and gradually won support in the Swedish Parliament. That is a fine and comforting example of resistance being rewarded.

The risk of too much negative propaganda – and the mass media are so full of catastrophes – is that it contributes to making people passive and defeatist. Consequently I don't think too much time should be spent in peace education on describing how miserable things are. Young people know that, and so do adults .

Mildred Masheder (London, England)

We have covered this earlier to some extent. There has been an enormous propaganda in our country saying that peace education is indoctrination. Many parents have believed this. So I think that there *are* great difficulties. One of the best ways of dealing with this problem is to establish very strong links with the parents.

The parents would often love for the children to be more self-confident, more able to solve their own conflicts and not be involved in so many quarrels, so one way to start is to emphasize these aspects, dealing with conflicts in their own school.

Gerald F. Mische (New York, USA)

My solution is to *frame* the questions, demonstrating that the world is a different place today, that we are talking about true security, that our destinies are intertwined, that we have something to learn from other nations, other people, other cultures.

ÅB: But you would expect that there would be some difficulties?

GM: Yes, sometimes very much. In our country we have had a history of ideological confrontation, and we have been taught to believe that we have

the final answers. Fortunately, the rapid emergence of global-scale problems – e.g., ecological breakdown, third world dept, international drug trafficking, terrorism, etc. – which nations cannot solve by themselves is providing new openness to moving beyond simplistic ideology. Gorbachev's flexible and creative leadership is also contributing to this openness.

Valentina Mitina (Moscow, Russia)

About three years ago, we had some difficulties especially in disarmament education. But with the new changes in our society – for example, we are cutting down the military budget – it is becoming easier. Using the term "international education" has not been difficult in our country, but when we try to make comparative research and speak about the same things with people outside our country, it has sometimes been difficult.

If we meet difficulties with parents, we have to discuss with them, showing them that we really need disarmament education because of the changes in socicty. Of course, there are still parents or students who have other opinions, and we should be prepared for pluralistic views.

Robert Muller (Escazu, Costa Rica; New York, USA)

Changing from a nationalistic education to a global education and an education for peace means a dramatic change in perspective. It is natural that some would look upon this change with concern and suspicion. But we have good arguments on our side, and we should spell them out clearly. Focusing on global education as the number one concern rather than on disarmament education, as I just suggested, may help counteract some of the suspicion.

Eva Nordland (Oslo, Norway)

Since peace education was regarded with suspicion in Norway in the 70s, other terms, for example "international education", were often used in those days, for nobody could object to that, especially since it is mentioned in the Norwegian school law. Questioning the national military defence and

our membership in NATO was a particularly delicate matter.

If anyone had asked me in 1949 whether I wanted to vote for NATO, I would have said no, because then I was in favour of a Nordic community. But it wouldn't occur to me to bring up that discussion now, because that would mean losing lots of opportunities for communication. In Norway today, over 70% are firmly against the use of nuclear weapons of any kind, but at the same time there are 70% who are enthusiastic supporters of a Norwegian membership in NATO. This is of course a contradiction since NATO has its first-employment doctrine which must be considered to run counter to our attitude to nuclear weapons. Here we have had loyal media who have vindicated the national policy so forcefully that these issues are never brought to the attention of large groups of the general public in Norway.

When you introduce peace education, you should choose those designations that can be accepted by parents, since the important thing is to initiate a process, a process of growth. Certain terms tend to create consensus more easily, giving us an opportunity to speak to and influence each other.

Mitsuo Okamoto (Hiroshima, Japan)

One of the difficulties will be that "peace" is often seen as connected with communism and socialism, with people to the left or something like that, and if the members of the board of education in a certain place are conservative, then they don't like the introduction of peace education in schools. Then I try to persuade these people by using the term "peace studies", stressing that in peace studies we deal not only with education against war, but also with human rights, violence against nature, equality, democracy etc.

ÅB: But since the word "peace" is used in both expressions, wouldn't peace studies be as "bad" as peace education?

MO: Logically this is true. But I think that peace education in our country is now a set term with some unfortunate connotations; but what is peace studies? I use this latter term as an opportunity to explain what I have in mind, what I want to communicate.

Priscilla Prutzman (Nyack, New York, USA)

Yes, we have been dealing with that ever since the beginning, really. We always meet reactions like "I am telling you to hit back if you get hit". We had now had this visualized in the form of Yellow Ribbons. In this country the Yellow Ribbon grew out of a song called "Tie a yellow ribbon around the old, old tree", which meant: If some persons were away you tied a yellow ribbon around a tree to remind yourself of them. The yellow ribbon got started as a symbol of supporting the men and the women who were in the Iraq war, and it originally only meant supporting people and individuals, it didn't mean the war or not the war. But with this nationalism and patriotism that got going so fast, the yellow ribbon by the end of the war was a symbol of supporting the war. There was a movement to start a new ribbon which should mean that we support people but not the war, because the symbol got very distorted; and it was so clear that the government was contributing to this, was really behind it.

At the schools where we had the most advanced peace education program, yellow ribbons were put on its front door. That arose the controversy among the people who were in the peace education program there and they felt that it wasn't right to put the yellow ribbons on, so they kind of got into a kind of argument with themselves about it. It became an ongoing dialogue.

Going back to your question, I think opening the dialogue, opening the discussion is a way to handle such situations and looking at the consequences. I think there is nothing more apt to change people's minds than examining what happens when a conflict escalates. One of the reasons that this war was allowed to be escalated in the way that it did is that we did not see all the people who died over there. They kept that hidden. If you see what happens to a person in a fight, you look for other alternatives.

This is sort of digressing, but I think that our government has figured out the tactics of the peace movement and uses them themselves to disarm the peace movement. I just see over and over again that they change the language, such as when they talk about "peace keepers". In the news the other day the term "an outbreak of peace" was used. This is a title of a peacebook for children.

ÅB: Did you have greater difficulty with your program during this war period or after the war than earlier?

PP: Yes. I felt like I needed to constantly run around and say to people:

things are going to be ok. There was a great deal of panic. I think people were in shock when this happened, people did not know what happened, and our role became almost counselling. Children's parents were going off – they might be killed. We had to deal with death and fear issues. We advised teachers how to respond, and basically the main idea was that we needed to listen to the feelings and be there. It was vitally important to discuss and not just say: well, we are not going to discuss it, as I gather a lot of classroom just didn't discuss it – they were afraid. It changed our work dramatically, it made us create materials like we'd never created materials. We had a fifty-page packet ready to distribute within a few days. Not that the materials were not around already, but they had to be adapted for this particular war because it was so unique. Media education was particularly vital during that period. It was confusing for me how some people could be so in favour of peace and the next day be supporting the war. That's something I really haven't totally come to grips with myself yet. That's part of that shock; we were in shock during that period.

Hanns-Fred Rathenow (Berlin, Germany)

Many teachers and heads have experienced difficulties with parents, governors, Local Education Authorities officers or even the press when introducing peace education issues in their schools or classrooms. Speaking about nuclear risks or the interrelationship between the arms race and poverty in the Third World is considered by a lot of people to be related to communist or leftist ideas. And no doubt, I cannot teach about CND's (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) policy on unilateral disarmament without mentioning the traditional alternatives to that. Parents are more aware than 20 years ago of what is going on in schools in the field of political education. I would expect some critical comments by parents on peace education issues, but isn't it a chance for a lively community? There are a lot of teachers who are complaining that parents don't complain to them, but they are directly complaining to the head or the LEA officer.
ÅB: Could there be some ways out of these difficulties?
HR: I think this is a question of changing attitudes in society, generally speaking. If we had small schools with face-to-face communication and close relationship between pupils, parents and teachers, then probably a better climate, a more trustful atmosphere could arise and could make it

possible to speak about controversial issues and subjects more freely, frankly and openly than it is the case today.

Douglas Ray (London, Ontario, Canada)

On various occasions in Canada, there have been these types of problems. One of the most important has to deal with the duty of every male citizen serving the armed forces. Under what circumstances is it considered appropriate for a person to say: I do not wish to serve, I want to be a conscientious objector? At one time, a conscientious objector was considered to be a coward by many Canadians. More recently, I think, this is not seen as a major problem. Conscientious objectors in Canadian law are required to fulfil their duties to society in some other way than as military service, and since Canada has not recently been at war, there is no particular difficulty in dealing with other means than serving in combat as a way of serving your country.

There probably are important problems for some members of our Canadian society when certain solutions to problems are proposed. For example, one group in our Canadian society would like to have holocaust education within the schools. There is immediately a problem. Which holocausts are you going to refer to? This promotes a great deal of acrimonious debate. If you discuss holocaust education, what do you do about the inevitable labelling and critizism of groups responsible for the holocausts? Related groups in Canadian society who are not personally responsible in any way for the holocaust feel that they are being criticized unfairly, and that it should not be done. Canada has a particularly severe problem in this respect because most of the countries in the world have significant numbers of migrants who have come to Canada. It's an extremely cosmopolitan country, and it is no longer possible to have the views of one group imposed upon all of the others.

ÅB: And how would you deal such problems?

DR: I think I would deal with them as a general problem. For example, when considering the question of holocaust education, I would deal with the problem of discrimination. Discrimination exists in all societies, and it exists at various levels. A low level of discrimination may mean something like you will not call a particular person your friend because of his or her membership of such and such a group. At a higher level, you might not

employ that person because of his or her membership in such and such a group, and at still higher levels you might exclude them come to your country. At the most serious level, you would put them to death, you would exterminate them, and there would be a holocaust. We have in recent history a number of holocausts which might be identified, but I think that if there are only two events that should be dealt with from the second world war, they are, first the Nazi holocausts of Jews, Gipsies and many others, and secondly the atomic bomb. Most other aspects of World War II are indistinguishable from the kind of things that happen in most wars. You have heroism and you have agony. You have suffering on an unprecedented scale, but nevertheless this was not different in kind, but only in numbers involved. The two things which were different in kind were the holocaust by the Nazis and the use of the atomic bomb. For those reasons I would emphasize those particular events from World War II.

Betty Reardon (New York, USA)

Peace education has created quite a lot of discussion in the United States, especially when it takes the form of nuclear education which is so visible to the general public. Teachers should anticipate critical attitudes and should not avoid them but try to handle them constructively. How strong the difficulties will be depends on a number of things: mainly what is done in preparation and how the teacher responds. It should be natural to try to involve the community from the beginning. If an attempt is made to help build public acceptance and even the desire to have such education in school, the introduction will obviously be much easier. Schools should recognize that parents have their right to express concern when they are scared and angry and try to understand the underlying causes of the fear and anger. Then the discussion can be more constructive and contribute to the education of the community also.

Tom Roderick (New York, USA)

I do see difficulties. I think that if it's done in certain ways it's going to alienate people. For instance, if you start introducing nuclear issues in a way that terrifies kids – that's going to upset people. If you put forth

certain solutions without looking at them from various points of view, you run into problems. Sometimes, when a city is mainly populated by military personnel, nearby a military base for example, even to start raising the questions causes problems. But for the most part, I think it's the way that's it's done rather than the content.

Our idea of conflict resolution is that you can deal with conflict in a way that respects people. That approach can apply to controversial issues. You need to introduce such issues in a very careful and sensitive way, and to begin where your constituency is. In New York, we asked the teachers what area they wanted to work with. They were concerned about interpersonal conflict in their classrooms primarily, so that's where we started, but then we can build on that and proceed to other areas.

I think it's very important when you introduce these issues that you avoid pushing any one solution or any narrow political agenda. It has to be a real solid educational process with a long-range perspective. There's that slogan: If you can change my mind completely to go to your point of view today, then someone else can come along tomorrow, and I'll go off in the other direction. What we want to develop is first: people who care about what's going on in the world, and second: people who are able to think about it in a constructive and thorough way, so that they make up their own minds. I think that if that's what you're really doing – then, in most places you won't run into too much trouble; and if you do, then at least you're having an honest fight: you aren't vulnerable in a moral or educational sense.

Paul Rogers (Belfast, Northern Ireland)
& Maura Ward (Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland)

MW: There are some difficulties, but less so than in other countries due to the fact that we are a neutral country. Violence and negative intergroup attitudes have played such an big role in our society, it should be easy for people to see the need for some kind of peace education.
PR: Our schools in Northern Ireland exist in a very divided and often violent society. Our own community violence has resulted in a number of teachers searching for a role in helping to solve our political, social and economic problems. A lot of goodwill exists at all levels in this search, but there are those (parents included) who would vigorously object to schools being in- volved in this kind of work. Parents and pupils in such instances,

should have the right to withdraw from these activities but those who wish to carry on with curriculum experimentation in this area should also have the right to work at building a more just and peaceful society here.

Bogdan Rowiński (Konstancin, Poland)

I don't think we will meet many difficulties in school or with parents. I think that the experience of Poland proves that peace is the only way to live and develop, but there may be some difficulties in handling peace education properly. For example, there is the danger of indoctrination; we must be careful not to show only one side of a problem or stress only one solution as the correct one.
ÅB: Do you think that teachers would see some conflict between what you call patriotic education and peace education?
BR: Yes, they may experience some difficulty, I think.
ÅB: Is that something that has been discussed among teachers?
BR: I don't know very much about this. I think that the most important thing is the international situation. If it develops in a positive way, like now, without tension, we can leave the defense problems and we can pay more attention to peace education. But if there is new tension, the preparation of young people to handle arms will again come into focus, and the conflict mentioned may be more obvious.

Paul Smoker (Yellow Springs, Ohio, USA)

Yes, people do have difficulties if they are introducing peace education in schools. It's a hot potato. The difficulties are mainly caused by parents or politicians or members of the press who argue that peace education is biased, whereas other education is not. Now, I happen to believe that all education is biased; you show me unbiased education, and I will show you a square circle. I think that one can have an educational system in which many different biases are represented, and I am in favour of that, but I am unashamedly biased towards peace, avoidance of violence, elimination of structural violence and soforth. I think that it is wrong to defend peace education by saying it's neutral, as some people do. It *is* biased, but so is the teaching of all social subjects. Education is not independent of values and

ethics. The thing is to get a good range of biases, and then people can decide for themselves. And that's my answer how to get out of the problems.

Toh Swee-Hin (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada)

I think there are difficulties in both North and South, certainly in North countries. Some issues like disarmament are often regarded as controversial. This may be so because people with anti-peace-education views have carried out an effective propaganda campaign. In Australia, for example, in the early eighties the conservatives had a vigorous antipeace-education campaign. If they had not done so, parents in general might be less suspicious about peace education. So I think we can always anticipate some difficulties.

But a more important question is how we deal with those, and I think we can think of a number of ways. One is to openly explain to parents and members of the community our purposes. We are not trying to "indoctrinate" their children into peace activists although this does not imply a value-free or neutral orientation to societal or global issues and problems. We are concerned about critical understanding, and good education means to develop critical thinking. In peace education we should, on any issue, foster critical understanding of different points of view. That does not mean that we therefore as teachers are neutral. As peace educators our views come out any way and the processes of empowerment help catalyze students to consider personal action for transformation. But we will not say to the student, "You better believe this, or else I will fail you". We need to trust our students as human beings to hopefully opt for the peaceful paradigm. If they don't, we have not done a good enough job. So that's one way to get out of the problem.

Secondly, we should avoid language which colours the discussion. For example, in the Philippines, over the past few decades there has been a strong ideology of anti-communism as well as an ongoing revolutionary movement based on armed struggle. Therefore, we need to avoid any language in our peace education that inadvertently colours us as being "leftist". There is no reason why you cannot talk about justice without using the jargon of Marxism-Leninism, for example. We can talk about the role of powerful industrialized states in maintaining North-South inequalities without necessarily saying "imperialism". So how we use language is very

important, as a way to avoid being bogged down by preconceptions and to unnecessarily trigger resistance within our listeners. That is why we were able do a workshop with soldiers. In the beginning, they showed some suspicion: were we subversives in disguise? But at the end I think they listened with some openness to our critique of structural violence, militarization, human rights and other issues of peacelessness in the Philippines. We encouraged them to think critically, a process hitherto denied by their training and socialization.

Judith Torney-Purta (College Park, Maryland, USA)

In the United States people have very strong views on this subject. I think that giving balanced information to students and accurate information to parents is tremendously important. Responsible and careful curriculum development is also important, taking several perspectives into account. This is not easy, but educators should avoid leaving themselves open to the criticism that they are promoting their own particular point of view. I think that principle is important in all countries, not just the U.S.

Lennart Vriens (Utrecht, The Netherlands)

We often meet those difficulties. We have parents who say: "No, we don't want peace education, because we don't want our children to be indoctrinated into the point of view of the peace movement." Mostly it's possible to organize a discussion with those parents about the topic.

It's a very controversial issue for many town councils in the Netherlands, and it is handled very differently. Some town councils propagate peace education for their schools and invite the independent schools, mostly of Christian origin, to take part in this peace education too; but there are also town councils who forbid peace education, and many of the politicians who do this belong to the same political parties as those who recommend it, so it's really not politically consistent. The central representatives of the party have to find a formula and sometimes say: "We are not against peace education as long as it isn't indoctrination!"

I think it's very important to explain to parents and others that peace education is an opportunity for children to think about the peace problem,

to tell them what peace education really is. Many parents and politicians say: "OK, what you are doing is beautiful, but just don't call it peace education." It's very important to try to understand people who don't want peace education.

Riitta Wahlström (Jyväskylä, Finland)

Here in Finland, we can notice some change of attitudes. Some years ago, just talking in terms of peace education would have led many people to think about leftist propaganda. We now have in Finland a Law for Basic Schooling and a Law for Day Care (both from 1983) where it is stated that education should include education for peace, internationalism and common responsibility. This means a clear legalization of teachers' work in peace education, and this has contributed to a continued change of attitudes. But some people, although now a much smaller group consider peace education to be very leftist and "dangerous". They really do not know what peace education means. So there is still a strong need for public information and discussion.

Zlmarian J. Walker (Brasilia, Brazil)

In our school we seldom meet such difficulties, because parents have chosen to put their children in this particular school and know what we are at. But sometimes, we have two children in the classroom and their two countries are at war or have some particular difficulties. Then we have to walk carefully without compromising our principles. Of course, our school is a bit different from other schools.

Within more general Brazilian schools, there are two types of objections that I have met, especially among teachers in my peace education seminars. The first type is that these are not the problem of Brazil these are the problems of the Reagans and the Gorbachevs; people feel a certain distance from those problems. When you begin to define peace in its many aspects of, for example, freedom from structural violence or racism and sexism, when you begin to bring in all these concepts, some people would begin to see that this is a problem also for them. But there is often a certain group who indicate: Sorry, but peace issues are not my problems – why bother me

with this? There is another, sometimes related problem. There is a large group of people who feel that we first need to worry about "basics", having the idea that peace is not a basic need.

How could we go around these problems? I think we should take time to define and discuss peace with these people in detail and in such a way that they see the relevance. Most often it works, if we can take enough time.

Christoph Wulf (Berlin, Germany)

It is also the case in Germany that the concepts of "peace education" and "education for disarmament" have met with much emotional resistance. For this reason it may be more fruitful to find some other conceptualization of the themes and aims subsumed under this concept. What is decisive is not which concept we select in detail, but that we communicate the goals and contents, the values and standards of peace education. In the Federal Republic of Germany many problems which attract attention under the concept of peace education may be treated in the sphere of political education. Seen in this way, political education is peace education.

Richard Yarwood (London, England)

It depends on the age. I think that in upper secondary school, the ages of 16 to 18, it's very unusual for a parent to complain about diarmament education or peace education being taught in that school per se. As you go down the age range, you increasingly find parents who are concerned that their children shouldn't really be dealing with these issues. Part of this I think is because it is very unsettling for a parent who has never thought much about these things to be challenged by an 11 year old son or daughter asking why do we have nuclear weapons.

Otherwise, what most of the controversy seems to be about is balance, bias, and propaganda. Since it is not a recognized practice and it has often been introduced by individual teachers, there is seen to be a political tint to it. And, of course, if the teacher is against nuclear weapons, parents might suspect indoctrination of their children. Children often go through an altruistic or idealistic phase or a rebellious phase, and they may come home from school suddenly very anti-nuclear and that can be very disturbing to a

parent.

Much of the controversy really is about fears of bias and onesidedness, and I think that any good teacher is very aware and sympathetic to that charge and would not like to be seen as biased. In this situation, we have really been on the defensive and a lot of people are now saying: We in peace education should stop being on the defensive, we must start being much more assertive about our work and arguments. But in order for teachers to teach in a balanced way, they need support, they need training and they need resources and material. All this has been lacking.

Then there is this whole interesting question of balanced teaching and balanced learning. You have a balanced learning situation when you have learnt about all sides. But in order to accomplish that, it might be necessary to have unbalanced teaching. An example of that might be that in the debate about defence, the options put up are often either to have a nuclear defence or a non-nuclear defence. But as a pacifist, I could argue that in fact these two positions may very well be seen as representing the same side of the spectrum in terms of violence, and that the real spectrum to be looked at when discussing defence is from violent defence to non-violent defence. If a teacher were sympathetic to that point of view, they might invite me or some other pacifist in for a onetime input to put our point of view across. It might not be necessary to have another teacher in for another input with, say, the NATO point of view, because there is so much information and propaganda available anyway. But then it could be argued that because nobody went in to balance the "pacifistic" argument, the teaching was biased.

I think that, in general, the way out of the problems in this area is really just keeping parents informed and encourage feedback about what's going on, and most of them will very soon realize that the teacher handles this in an admirable way. Certainly if parents are naive about certain issues there, their contribution to the debate is nevertheless important, and the outcome may in fact be peace education also among adult community members.

Nigel Young (Hamilton, New York, USA)

I think the situation is very similar in many ways. I think that people are worried about indoctrination. They won't be so worried about violence. They are worried about frightening children. I think parents and teachers

are worried about their own unspoken fears and, in fact, about their own inability to deal with this problem area. I think the very act of introducing peace education is an act of social change, and any kind of social change will meet with some resistance. It's a great responsibility, and one must be responsible in doing it. This is why I emphasize not presuming to have answers and that it is much more a mutual learning, a problem-solving enterprise, and I think that bringing in community members is very important.

ÅB: It seems that here in Britain there has been quite a lot of bad press around peace education?

NY: Yes. I think that both in the U.S. and in Britain the new right-wing conservatives have seen it as a dangerous development and have attacked it - very often based on mis-information. But sometimes with *some* justification. On the whole, the government propaganda in favour of security through traditional methods has a much greater impact than the work of peace studies. So I think that it is very reasonable to try to bring about some balance in the discussions; providing a counterweight to state views on security.

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